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An Extraordinary Example of Media–Minority Relations: The Polish Minority in the Turkish Media

Abstract

Adampol / Polonezköy is a Polish village located on the Asian side of İstanbul, founded due to the efforts of Prince Adam Czartoryski in the nineteenth century. The village is an extraordinary example of a Catholic minority in a Muslim environment, making the community and its representation in the media particularly interesting. This research-based study focuses on how the Polish minority is represented in the Turkish media in the light of van Dijk's critical discourse analysis. The study evaluates how texts and photographs have been structured in newspapers by examining news stories about Adampol / Polonezköy from the Milliyet newspaper and the haberler.com and adampolpolonezkoy websites.

Keywords: Adampol; Polish minority; media-minority relations; language-ethnic minority

1 Introduction

The portrayal of the Polish minority in the Turkish media illustrates the formation of a complex relationship between a Western non-Muslim community and an Eastern Muslim community. The Turkish media portray non-Muslim communities in a more negative light than Muslim communities. This attitude should be taken into account in the process of understanding their relationship with the Polish minority. In this context, Henry (1999, as cited in Mahtani, 2001, p. 2) points out that media-minority relationships are a significant research area for exploring how social identities are formed. Moreover, the media are the source of information about minorities. Simply put, the Turkish media are responsible for how public opinion is shaped, interpreted and received by Turkish citizens.

Fleras and Kunz (2001) state that the media accentuate the negative attributes of minority groups. Despite this, the Turkish media broadcast positive images about the Polish minority, which helps to create a good impression of them among Turks. However, media coverage of Polish communities in Turkey is not to be found in most mass media outlets, unless the material refers to politicians or famous persons.

This article consists of three main parts. The first discusses minorities and the literature devoted to Turkish media in the context of media and minority relationships. The second section analyses the social and sociolinguistic situation of Polish migrants in Turkey, including their cultural and social integration as well as ethnic activities. Finally, the last section examines the examples of Polish minority representations in both the national and local media.

2 The Portrayal of Minorities in the Turkish Media

The identification and protection of minorities in Turkey is based on the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, which focuses on non-Muslim communities and aims to allow them to function and live according to their religions, as well as to guarantee them various social and educational rights. However, not all non-Muslim communities have the right to be recognized as a minority in Turkey. Even though Greeks, Bulgarians, Christians, Armenians and Jews are recognized, many of them were denied official minority status in the *millet* system, which dates back to the Ottoman administration. This policy affects minority rights and is a cause for concern among Muslim and non-Muslim minorities in today's Turkey (TPQ, 2020).

The Turkish government officially lists Jews, Armenian Orthodox Christians and Greek Orthodox Christians as minorities. On the other hand, the government does not officially recognize the following groups as minorities: Bosnians, Georgians, Africans, Protestant Christians, Shia Muslims, Bulgarians, Yazidis, Arabs, Catholic Christians, Assyro–Chaldeans, Alevis, Roma, and Kurds. This lack of official recognition affects the minorities' rights, their cultural heritage, historical background, daily activities and language, which may lead to the eventual assimilation of minorities (Toktas & Aras, 2009, pp. 698–703).

It is necessary to explain the *millet* system in order to understand the recognition of minorities in Turkish law. Öztürk (2014, p. 71) explains the system on the basis of the Islamic ideology pertaining to the protection of other religions and nationalities. On this basis, the *millet* system defines non-Muslim communities as minorities as determined by the Ottoman administrative system (Mardin, 1981, p. 199). The *millet* system guaranteed the rights of each *millet* (national non-Muslim community) to live under their own laws or religious rules in the territory of the Ottoman Empire. Today, minority rights in Turkey are affected by the *millet* system ideology, as only non-Muslim communities are recognized as minorities and refugees.

As a result of this ideology, the international conventions addressing minorities were not perceived as necessary in Turkey's minorities system prior to European Union candidacy. However, after Turkey applied for EU membership minority groups became an issue for discussion. According to EU minorities policy, Turkey's failure to recognize linguistic, ethnic and religious minorities represents an impediment to the adoption of EU law (Toktas & Aras, 2009).

EU law regarding linguistic minorities allows them to use their language in national and local media outlets. In 2004, Turkey's national broadcaster TRT (The Turkish Radio Television Corporation) started broadcasting in minority languages, with the content controlled by the government. However, these positive attitudes changed after the failed coup attempt on 15th July 2016. The Turkish government shut down many media outlets, including some minority TV channels, radio stations, newspapers and websites, under Decree Law No. 668. The TRT Law No. 2954 allows TV stations to broadcast programs in different languages. This problem continues in other media outlets, as the government controls new media and print media, as well as minority access to them. As a result, pluralism in Turkey regarding minorities and media is weakening as government control is increasing (Inceoglu et al., 2016).

Language is also a problem that minorities face in Turkey during their education and daily activities. According to Turkish law, only the Turkish language can be used in education, which causes problems for linguistic minorities struggling to maintain their language identity. However, Turkey has altered its official attitude to minority languages, which is a positive step for minorities who want to use their language freely. In 2013, the Democratization Package (announced by the government to improve the democratic standards of the country) modified the rules of language use in politics, education, criminal sanction and in village names (TPQ, 2020).

When it comes to relations between minority groups and the media, minorities face many obstacles in the form of media ownership, censorship and discrimination. With this in mind, research is needed to examine relations between the Polish minority and the media, and the positive media representation of the Polish community. In order to analyse the relations of the Polish minority and media in Turkey, this paper is based on van Dijk's critical discourse analysis.

First proposed in *Racism and the Press* (van Dijk, 1991), critical discourse analysis is a way of observing a chosen media product in order to find a negative or positive picture of the community in question. Although van Dijk emphasises that media play a paramount role in the emergence, development and reproduction of racist attitudes, this is not the only way in which minority groups are depicted. Such is the case with the Polish minority in Turkey, which is presented positively in the media.

Van Dijk's discourse analysis explains the relations between the text and the social power of the dominant groups in media products. Within this framework, mass media products are observed in the light of social, political, cultural and economic factors. Van Dijk details the framework as social power, as well as the dominance of groups or institutions that are manipulative in modern societies. According to discourse analysis, headlines, semantic strategies, style, thematic structure and rhetorical figures are important for manipulating readers and listeners. In this context, discourse structures transmit a specific message to the receiver that can create a general ideology or attitudes towards a specific group (van Dijk, 1995, p. 85).

Other researchers studying relations between the media and minorities have identified some theoretical weaknesses of van Dijk's discourse analysis and have moved on to a more nuanced discussion about media ownership and the reasons behind specific minority images in media. Awad (2008) discussed cultural diversity in the news media by explaining the importance of democratic participation. According to Awad, diversity in the media and media ownership is a social responsibility which is essential for the survival of the media market (Awad Cherit, 2008, pp. 56–57). He also discussed the role of ethnic communications by identifying minority media outlets as being representatives of the community to the majority society. Rodríguez (Rodríguez et al., 2001, p. 5) claims that minority media is a way of identifying the community in their language and culture by publishing cultural, ethnic, economic or political news to attract an audience. In the case of Turkey, a majority of the mass media is controlled by the government. CAP's survey indicates that public opinion is aware of government censorship over the media (Hoffman et al., 2020).

Another key fact in media and minority research is the appearance of new ethnic media outlets (Fleras & Kunz, 2001), including those of local and religious groups in Turkey. Non-Muslim communities express their cultural identity and traditions through their media. More specifically, many non-Muslim communities have newspapers which advocate for their rights, traditions and histories: Agos, $Nor\ Marmara$ and Jananak are Armenian newspapers; Apoyev matini is a Greek-Orthodox publication and Paros is a multicultural newspaper founded by Armenian and Greek-Orthodox friends.

3 The Polish Minority in Turkey

The presence of ethnic, religious and language minorities has been part of Turkish society for centuries. Despite the diversity of minorities, the Turkish government merely classifies them as either Muslim or non-Muslim communities, an approach which comes from the Ottoman minority (azınlık) policy. Aydın has distinguished between "local communities" who have been functioning in Turkey's socio-cultural landscape since the 11th century and "immigrants" who arrived during the Ottoman period. According to Aydın's (2017) distinction, the Polish minority is an immigration group which arrived to Istanbul in the 19th century as war refugees. Today, the Polish minority in Adampol / Polonezköy is described as an ethnic-religious group according to international minority description, even though Turkey does not officially recognize them as such.

The Ottoman Empire's conflict with Egypt caused them to seek new military alliances in Western Europe. During this search, one of the Turkish envoys, Namık Kemal, met with the Polish Prince Adam Czartoryski and proposed the transfer to the Ottoman Empire of Polish soldiers who had settled in France after the failed November Uprising. This proposal entailed many dilemmas for both countries. At that time, the Ottoman Empire was aligned with Russia, while Poland sought

Anglo-French support, making Polish-Turkish relations difficult. This complicated relationship continued as some Poles joined the Egyptian army against the Ottoman Empire. Nonetheless, Prince Czartoryski sent Wojciech Chrzanowski as an advisor to the Turkish army. Chrzanowski's efficient cooperation with the Turkish army helped Prince Czartoryski to establish a Polish agency in Turkey (Urbanik & Baylen, 1981).

Polish migration to Turkey started as a result of this Polish–Turkish cooperation. Prince Adam Czartoryski started to encourage the Ottoman Empire to help Poles gain independence by establishing a village on the Asian side of İstanbul. At first, the idea to found an agricultural village was not accepted due to political uncertainty. Mehmet Sadik Pasha (the Turkish name of Michal Czajkowski) (Ünver, 2017), played an important role in the establishment of Adampol in 1842, as it was his request to Sultan Abdülmecid which led to Poles being allowed in the Istanbul region (Antonowicz-Bauer, 1992, as cited in Marszałek-Kawa & Burak, 2016, pp. 11–12).

During the migration process, the Ottoman Empire supported Poland's independence movement, defending their rights in relations with Russia and Austria. Later, Turkish authorities agreed with the Russian and Austrian authorities' position on Poland. The Ottoman Empire offered Polish refugees a choice between emigrating to Western Europe or staying in Turkey. Some Polish refugees chose to emigrate, while 400 of them decided to settle in Adampol or in Balkan Christian settlements in Turkey (Urbanik & Baylen, 1981).

In the beginning, Adampol was inhabited by only 12 people, but the population increased after the European Revolutions of 1848–1849. One of the most significant problems regarding the functioning of the Polish minority in Turkey was the ownership of Adampol land. Until 1883, the village belonged to Lazarist priests and was then taken over by the Czartoryski family for the next 85 years. Poles in Adampol / Polenezköy (the Turkish name for Adampol, literally "Polish village") received Turkish citizenship in 1938 (Consulate General, n.d., as cited in Marszałek-Kawa & Burak, 2016, pp. 12–13).

Today Adampol / Polenezköy stands out from other Turkish villages because of its unique culture, atmosphere and historical background. The village has evolved from an agricultural community to a tourist attraction, which has helped contribute to its economic welfare.

With regard to media interest in Adampol / Polenezköy, Marszałek-Kawa and Burak (2016) note that the meetings between Suleyman Demirel and Lech Wałęsa in Turkey and Poland played a significant role. The media began to take an interest in the Polish minority in the context of political communities. The media's association of Suleyman Demirel with the Polish minority resulted in frequent visits to the village (Marszałek-Kawa & Burak, 2016).

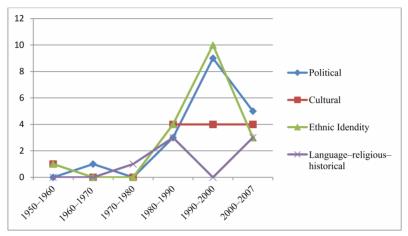
4 Methodology

For the purposes of this study, all articles containing information about the Polish minority in Turkey appearing in the following mass media were analysed: *Milliyet* (https://www.milliyet.com.tr/), haberler.com (https://www.haberler.com/) and adampolpolonezköy (https://adampolpolonezkoy.wordpress.com/). Due to the limited amount of Polish minority news in the Turkish media, there was no need to specify a time span. The articles, analysed as texts and photographs, identify relations between the Polish minority and the Turkish media.

The choice of sources was dictated by their nature. *Milliyet* was selected to examine traditional mass media outlets while *haberler.com* was selected in order to provide the perspective of the digital media. The third source, *adampolpolenezköy.wordpress.com*, is an ethnic media outlet that provides news from the village, including reprinted and historical sources from both Polish and Turkish newspapers. These three sources will provide diversity of both contents and the ways of presenting the Polish minority in the Turkish media.

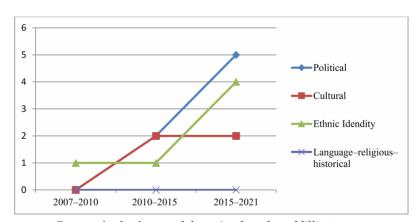
Milliyet is one of the oldest newspapers in Turkey, which began to be published in 1926 with the special permission of the founder of the Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. However, between 1935–1950 *Milliyet* changed its name to *Tan* and closed for political reasons (Akın, 2000).

The newspaper started to be published again under the name *Milliyet* on 3 May 1950. Over time, *Milliyet* has become one of the most important newspapers in terms of circulation (*History of Milliyet*, n.d.). The ownership of *Milliyet* has changed several times, affecting the political stance taken by the editors. Currently, the editorial board favours the ruling party, AKP. The newspaper has an archive that contains all materials published between 1950 and 2007, among which there were 53 stories and articles about Adampol / Polonezköy. For the period from 2007 to November 2021, which was distinguished in the article as being the most recent and which was subjected to a more detailed analysis, the number of texts was 17.



Source: Author's own elaboration based on (Milliyet Gazete Arşivi, n.d.).

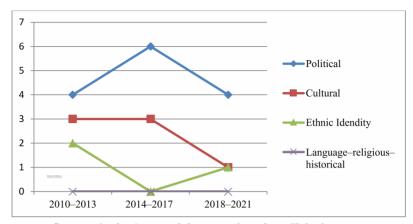
Figure 1. News content 1950–2007 (based on the *Milliyet* archive time span) on *Milliyet Gazete Arşivi* according to thematic profile.



Source: Author's own elaboration based on ${\it Milliyet.com}.$

Figure 2. News content 2007–2021 on *Milliyet* according to thematic profile.

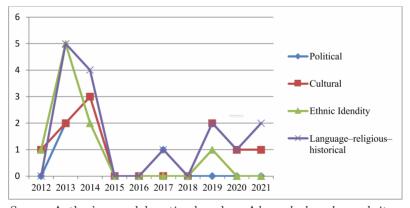
The second source is the website *Haberler.com*, founded in 2006. The site publishes news from different newspapers and websites. *Haberler.com* has won many awards from various platforms (*History of Haberler.com*, n.d.) and has been publishing news about Adampol / Polonezköy on political, cultural and historical content since 2010.



Source: Author's own elaboration based on Haberler.com

Figure 3. News content 2010–2021 on Haberler.com according to thematic profile.

The third media outlet is the Adampolpolonezköy website (https://adampolpolonezkoy.wordpress.com/), a Polish minority page which has been publishing information from the village in Polish, Turkish and English since 2012. The main language of the articles is Polish. Content is divided into the following categories, accessible from the main menu: famous people of Polish origin in Turkey, historical background, religious, cultural and ethical content. New information about the community appears at irregular intervals. The adampolpolonezköy website plays an important role in representing the community, thus enabling the Polish minority to preserve and express their cultural, religious, linguistic and ethnic identity. The website archive is divided into months and contains a total of 26 entries covering the period from October 2012 to October 2021.



Source: Author's own elaboration based on Adampolpolonezkoy website.

Figure 4. adampolpolonezkoy website content 2012–2021.

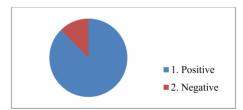
After creating the corpus of texts and their initial thematic ordering and quantitative inventory, the method of critical discourse analysis proved to be the most adequate approach to examining current and older news by analysing the meaning behind the message of the text, the photographs and the context in the chosen news items.

5 The Representation of the Polish minority in the Turkish Media

Lester states that "media coverage of individuals in a specific cultural group usually presents them as special cases to be pitied for their terrible living conditions, admired for bettering themselves, or, most often, reviled for their criminal actions" (Lester, 1995, p. 105).

In Turkey's case, non-Muslim communities are faced with marginalization in the media. Importantly, non-Muslim communities are recognized as minority groups, although freedom of religion faces serious challenges in Turkey. The most serious constraints that officially unrecognized minorities face are property rights and religious education in schools (Almairac, 2006). The Polish minority, as Catholic Christians, face similar problems to all non-Muslim communities in Turkey, yet the Polish minority enjoys a peaceful environment in which they can perform their religious activities without difficulty. Furthermore, the Turkish media marginalizes non-Muslim minorities while presenting a positive image of the Polish minority, despite their Catholic confession.

The analysed content proves that the Turkish media do not marginalize the Polish community in the surroundings of Istanbul. The Polish minority, and the fact that they retain their identity, are often mentioned in the news to emphasise Turkish hospitality to other nations, as well as to underline good relations with Poles or the Polish government. Over 70 years in the analysed media, there have been only 3 instances of news about Adampol / Polonezköy that could be classified as negative or partially negative. The first news item concerns Emil Dodado's death in 1954. The media did not portray the Polish minority or ethnic identity in a negative light directly but mentioned Poles while describing the case in detail. The second news item was published in 1998 and referred to a conflict between Polish and Turkish villagers. The language used in the material in relation to the Polish minority was not negatively marked, as even the syntactic constructs were created in the same way for Turkish villagers. The headline "Polonyalılar ve Türkler karşı karşıya" ("Poles and Turks Against Each Other)" proves the Turkish media's attitude towards the Polish minority as neutral. The last example of non-positive content is a story describing a change in the land development plan for Adampol / Polonezköy. The village is located in a forest region which, due to its natural beauty and location within the agglomeration of Istanbul, is a popular holiday destination for the city's inhabitants. The reconstruction proposed by the state authorities assumed the use of the area for housing development and industry. The opinion of the story's author remained on the side of the Polish minority to protect the forest from development with the slogan of "direnpolonezköy" ("Occupy Polonezköy").



Source: Author's own elaboration based on Milliyet and Haberler.com

Figure 5. News items referring to negative or positive situations.

In general terms, the problem of discrimination against minorities does not apply to Adampol / Polenezköy. The attitude towards the Polish minority differs from the usual minority-media relations. Although the image of Poles is positive not only in their own minority media, but also in Turkish media (traditional and digital), the thematic distribution of published materials differs depending on the source.

The table above organizes material concerning the Polish minority according to content, taking into account the following thematic groups: cultural, language-historical-religious, Polish identity,

Topic / Context	Milliyet	Haberler.com	adam pol polonezkoy/Wordpress	Total Articles
Festivals and cultural activities	25	9	10	44
Language, historical, religious	14	_	18	32
Polish identity, ethnic names	21	3	10	34
Political	26	15	6	47

Table 1. Table of news content.

Source: Author's own elaboration based on the chosen media outlets.

and political. Moreover, examples of the thematic groups are important for illustrating the representation of the Polish minority in the chosen media outlets:

- a) Festivals and cultural news: The first examined thematic group is represented e.g. with the article *Polonezköy'de Kiraz Festivali* (Cherry Festival in Polonezköy), published on 14/06/2014 on *Haberler.com* (*Polonezköy'de Kiraz Festivali*, 2014). The story is illustrated with a photo of women from the Polish minority and covers the Cherry Festival, the good relations between Poland and Turkey, the cultural activities in the festival, as well as interviews with the participants.
 - Another example of cultural news is found in the *Milliyet* archive, dated 29/05/1991 and entitled "*Polonyalı Sevgisi* (Polish Love)" (*Polonyalı Sevgisi*, 1991). The article explains how Polish migration is continuous with the cultural effect of Adampol / Polonezköv.
- b) Language, historical and religious news: Haberler.com does not cover any language, religious, or historical news, while Milliyet has 14 texts concerning these topics. One of the most significant examples is "Efsane haline gelen köy (The legendary village)", published on 05/07/1992 (Efsane haline gelen köy, 1992). In the text, Jerzy S. Łątka (a Polish Turkologist) describes the history of Adampol / Polonezköy up to 1992.
- c) Polish identity and ethnic names news: "Polonyalılar Beykoz'da (Poles in Beykoz)" was published on 29/10/2016 on Haberler.com (Polonyalılar Beykoz'da, 2016). The text an example of Polish identity news. The story concerns the visit to the Beykoz municipality of Marek Kuchcinski, Marshal of the Polish Parliament. The last paragraph states that Mr. Kuchcinski awarded commemorative medals to married couples who had been living in Adampol / Polonezköy for over 50 years.
 - Another example of this genre was the article published on 03/05/2019 in *Milliyet*, "Leyla Gencer vefatinin 11. yılında anılacak (Leyla Gencer will be commemorated on the 11th anniversary of her death)" (Leyla Gencer vefatinin 11. yılında anılacak, 2019). The text is a clear illustration of ethnic identity content. The text starts with a description of Leyla Gencer's death anniversary and continues with the story of her life and origin, as well as her relationship with her home village of Adampol / Polonezköv.
- d) Political news: The first example of political news is "Polonezköy Tabiat Parki'ni Koruma Eylemi (Protection Action of Polonezköy Nature Park)" published on 09/02/2014 on Haberler.com (Polonezköy Tabiat Parki'ni Koruma Eylemi, 2014). The story describes the villagers' campaign to protect the nature park, and contains two parts; the first explains the situation between the authorities and the village against the background of the village's history. The second starts with the subheading "Yok Edilmek İstenen Geleceğimizdir (It is our Future that they Want to Destroy)", which were the words of the speaker (Elif Narin) on behalf of the Adampol / Polonezköy community.
 - Another example of political content is the article "Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan Polonezköy muhtarını da Polonya'ya götürdü (President Erdoğan Takes the Headman of Polonezköy to Poland)" published on 17/10/2017 (Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan Polenezköy muhtarını da Polonya'ya

götürdü, 2017). The text describes Erdoğan's visit to Poland and includes his positive statements about Adampol / Polonezköy. The subheading "Polonezköy'ün Tarihi (The History of Polonezköy)" refers to the village and the text is supplemented with historical photos of the settlement.

News is categorised into genres and sub-genres to "exert a shaping impact upon the selection and framing of news stories about ethnic minorities" (Cottle, 2000, p. 22). In this context, text genres are important when discussing the division of the thematic groups, as well as the attitudes of the media towards the Polish minority. The chosen articles were analysed in the genres of news stories, information/short news, interviews, and opinion columns.

The most frequent text genre in the chosen articles is that of news story. 67.45% of articles on the Polish minority in the Turkish mass media were news stories, with political stories being especially frequent – 56% of political content was in the news story genre. The second most frequent genre is information/short news, which constitutes 22% of *Milliyet* and *Haberler.com* news. At the opposite extreme there are interviews. In 70 years only one text of this type has been written about the Polish minority. According to statistical data, the Polish minority has not been under-represented in the media so far, although the Polish news items are not on the main pages. The opinion column genre does not appear in the material, unless the content belongs the travel section.

In the whole sample, Polish minority news was published in the following thematic sections of the chosen newspapers: politics, culture & art, celebrities and sports. However, the exact text content can be distinguished as politics (30%), ethnic identity (22%), language, history and religion (21%) and cultural (27%) among 157 news items. This demonstrates that the content of the given article may belong to a different thematic group than the section of the newspaper in which it was published. Most often, the authors of the texts referred to politics, ethnic identity, and good relations between the Turkish and Polish governments, regardless of the section in which the article was published. The comparison of news concerning the Polish minority with news about officially recognized minorities (Greek Orthodox Christians, Armenian Orthodox Christians, and Jews) in the chosen media outlets reveals an overrepresentation of the Polish minority, taking into account both the number of the news items in relation to the size of given group, as well as the manner in which it is presented.

Examples of the positive depiction of the Polish minority in the specific thematic areas are "Polonya'nın dünyadaki tek savunucusu Türklerdi (Turks are the Only Defenders of Poland in the World)" (Milliyet, 08/01/1982), "İçkili, yemekli Polonya günü (Polish Day with Food and Drink)" (Milliyet, 08/05/1991) and "Polonezköy'de Cumhuriyet Kavgası (Republic Fight in Polonezköy)" (Milliyet, 19/04/1998). The Turkish press presented the Polish minority in a positive light in 88% of the analysed material.

In terms of illustrations, however, the conclusions are not clear as in the text analysis. Few photographs were attached to the discussed content, although if texts were supplemented with them, they presented a positive image of the Polish minority. *Milliyet*, the only newspaper among the selected media outlets, adds illustrations to the content on the Polish minority. The captions and titles related to the images used to describe the minority content in the cultural, political and ethnic identity themes have positive connotations. However, not all the headlines and content are accompanied by images.

6 Conclusions

Based on the conducted analysis, it can be concluded that the Turkish mass media portray the Polish minority positively, despite the community not being officially recognized as a minority group. This contradicts the results of previous research on media—minority relations in various disciplines, which has found that minorities are portrayed negatively. In general, Turkish media outlets fail to

pay significant attention to minorities, which is an example of their under-representation in the media space.

On the contrary, the Polish minority is presented with sensitivity to their cultural and religious differences and with tolerance, even concerning events that could have triggered a conflict with Turkish society. Neither politics nor conflicts between the Turkish and Polish governments have affected media attitudes towards the Adampol / Polonezköy community in Turkey. The village is generally described as a community that was founded as a result of Turkish hospitality. The media representation of Adampol / Polonezköy proves that media researchers need to consider improving relations with minorities in order to stimulate other types of outlooks.

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